

The Salonika Expedition

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TWO of the outstanding features of the war situation in Europe during the summer of 1915 were the tremendous and successful attack by the Teutons on the Russian front, and the definite failure of the Allied effort to force the Dardanelles. These events—neither of them decisive victories for the Central powers—were destined to have immediate and momentous results in Southeastern Europe. Thus far in the struggle, the only Balkan states to become active participants were Serbia, Montenegro, and Turkey. The attitude of the others was that of keenly interested neutrals. Greece on account of her former association with Serbia and her traditional friendship for Britain was believed to lean toward the Allies. Roumania, because of her antipathy to Austria, was also deemed to be more or less pro-Ally. The position of Bulgaria was more uncertain. She owed much to Russia for assistance in her deliverance from the Turk. On the other hand, she cherished a bitter hatred against Serbia, a hatred engendered by the Second Balkan War that had transferred from Sofia to Belgrade the control of a large slice of Macedonia inhabited largely by Bulgars. Had it not been for these reverses to the Allied arms, both of them near at hand and correspondingly impressive, it is quite probable that Greece, Roumania and even Bulgaria would have joined the Entente. As it was, it is hardly to be wondered at that these small nations adopted an attitude of "safety first". Bulgaria openly carried on negotiations with both sides, meanwhile proclaiming strict neutrality. It is now known, of course, that months before his actual entry into the war and while still bargaining with the Allies, King Ferdinand was bound in alliance with Germany and Austria. The Allies in the face of Serbian protests could not satisfy his demands, while the Central powers were quite willing to make the most generous concessions to his cupidity—to be paid at the expense of other nations.

This then was the situation in August and September when, finally halted at the gates of Riga and along the Pripet marshes, the strategists of Germany and Austria turned their attention to Serbia. Three times the Austrians had attacked their diminutive neighbour to the south and as often they had been hurled back across the Danube. Now the task was to be undertaken once more and carried through with true Teuton thoroughness. The Serbians, undeceived by their previous success,